

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 10, 2010

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Admiral Thad Allen
National Incident Commander
2100 Second Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20593

Dear President Obama and Admiral Allen,


Thank you for your leadership during the current oil spill crisis in the Gulf region. We appreciate the Administration's efforts in coordinating clean up operations, while ensuring that BP works to stop the leak and is ultimately held responsible for the clean-up costs and damages resulting from the spill.

We are writing today to express concern for the potential impact the spill could have on barge traffic on the Mississippi River and the further effect on agricultural commodities prices. We have heard concerns from individuals involved in shipping through the Mississippi River Delta that even slight delays can have a major impact on communities and businesses upriver. While current reports indicate that the major ports and shipping lanes are unaffected by the oil slick, and that there are precautions in place to remove oil from any affected vessels, past experience has shown that delays in traffic have had a drastic economic impact on regions beyond the Gulf of Mexico. Following Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the agricultural industry suffered sharp declines in the prices of commodities as a result of a traffic slowdown. Access to the Mississippi is crucial to many of the businesses in our districts, and is critical to the agricultural industry who depends on barge shipping to get their products to the rest of the world at competitive costs.

While you work to mitigate the economic impact of the oil spill, we request that the Administration perform a full analysis on the potential economic impact that the Gulf oil spill could have on barge traffic along the Mississippi River, and the further effect on commerce and local economies along the Mississippi. We appreciate your efforts to date on the oil spill, and ask that the full impact of the spill on regions beyond the Gulf Coast is realized.

Thank you for your attention to this request. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,


Bruce Braley
Member of Congress


Phil Hare
Member of Congress